

CLAIM SET AS AMENDED:

1. (Currently Amended) A molded resin laminate produced by joining a resin cover and a base resin component held on a mold of a forming machine to one another with a foamed resin component intervening therebetween in a cavity of said forming machine, and forming said resin cover and said foamed resin component by evacuating gas from said cavity through a plurality of gas-aspirating passages provided on a side of said cavity adjacent to said resin cover, wherein:

said molded resin laminate comprises a base layer composed of said base resin component, an intermediate layer composed of said foamed resin component, and a surface layer composed of said resin cover in this order, and an average diameter of cells existing in a region of said intermediate layer on a side of said surface layer is smaller than an average diameter of cells existing in a region on a side of said base layer, and ~~said molded resin laminate comprises a bent portion, and cells existing in said intermediate layer in a vicinity of said portion are elongated~~ wherein a thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer is different from a thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer.

2. (Original) The molded resin laminate according to claim 1, wherein said average diameter of said cells existing in said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer is 1/20 to 3/4 of said average diameter of said cells existing in said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer.

3. (Withdrawn) A method for producing a molded resin laminate comprising:

a first step of molding a base resin component composed of a molded resin piece by using a first forming machine;

a second step of arranging a resin cover between the base resin component held on a first mold of a second forming machine and a second mold with a foamed resin component intervening therebetween;

a third step of performing mold clamping for said second forming machine;

a fourth step of forming said resin cover by evacuating gas from a cavity of said second forming machine by the aid of said second mold of said second forming machine; and

a fifth step of forming said foamed resin component and joining said base resin component and said resin cover to one another with said foamed resin component intervening therebetween by evacuating gas from said cavity by the aid of said mold of said second forming machine on which said base resin component is held and said base resin component, wherein:

said molded resin laminate, which comprises a base layer composed of said base resin component, an intermediate layer composed of said foamed resin component, and a surface layer composed of said resin cover in this order, is produced; and

one, in which an average diameter of cells existing in a region on a side of said resin cover is smaller than an average diameter of cells existing in a region on a side of said base resin component, is used as said foamed resin component.

4. (Withdrawn) The method for producing said molded resin laminate according to claim 3, wherein one, in which said average diameter of said cells existing in said region on said side of said resin cover is $1/20$ to $3/4$ of said average diameter of said cells existing in said region on said side of said base resin component, is used as said foamed resin component.

5. (New) The molded resin laminate according to claim 1, wherein the thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer is substantially equal to one-half of the thickness of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer.

6. (New) The molded resin laminate according to claim 1, wherein the thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer is approximately 1 mm and the thickness of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer is approximately 2 mm.

7. (New) The molded resin laminate according to claim 1, wherein said average diameter of said cells existing in said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer is in a range of 0.0075 to 0.675 mm, and said average diameter of said cells existing in said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer is in a range of 0.15 to 0.9 mm.

8. (New) The molded resin laminate according to claim 1, said molded resin laminate further comprising a bent portion, and cells existing in said intermediate layer in a vicinity of said portion are elongated.

9. (New) A molded resin laminate produced by joining a resin cover and a base resin component held on a mold of a forming machine to one another with a foamed resin component intervening therebetween in a cavity of said forming machine, and forming said resin cover and said foamed resin component by evacuating gas from said cavity through a plurality of gas-aspirating passages provided on a side of said cavity adjacent to said resin cover, wherein:

said molded resin laminate comprises a base layer composed of said base resin component, an intermediate layer composed of said foamed resin component, and a surface layer composed of said resin cover in this order, and an average diameter of cells existing in a region of said intermediate layer on a side of said surface layer is smaller than an average diameter of cells existing in a region on a side of said base layer, wherein a thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer is less than a thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer.

10. (New) The molded resin laminate according to claim 9, wherein said average diameter of said cells existing in said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer is $1/20$ to $3/4$ of said average diameter of said cells existing in said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer.

11. (New) The molded resin laminate according to claim **9**, wherein the thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer is substantially equal to one-half of the thickness of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer.

12. (New) The molded resin laminate according to claim **9**, wherein the thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer is approximately 1 mm and the thickness of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer is approximately 2 mm.

13. (New) The molded resin laminate according to claim **9**, wherein said average diameter of said cells existing in said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer is in a range of 0.0075 to 0.675 mm, and said average diameter of said cells existing in said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer is in a range of 0.15 to 0.9 mm.

14. (New) The molded resin laminate according to claim **9**, said molded resin laminate further comprising a bent portion, and cells existing in said intermediate layer in a vicinity of said portion are elongated.

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-14 are pending, with claims 3 and 4 being withdrawn from consideration, and claims 5-14 being added. Claim 1 is amended. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the arguments and remarks set forth herein.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a)

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over EP 0331447 and, separately, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP '447 in view of the so-called admitted prior art. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Arguments Regarding Independent Claims 1 and 9

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance the prosecution of the present application, independent claim 1 is amended herein to recite a combination of elements directed to a molded resin laminate including a thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer is different from a thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer.

In addition, independent claim 9 is added herein to recite a combination of elements directed to molded resin laminate, including a thickness of said region of said intermediate

layer on said side of said surface layer is less than a thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer.

Support for a thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said surface layer being different from (or less than) a thickness of said region of said intermediate layer on said side of said base layer, as set forth in claims 1 and 9 respectively, can be found in the specification, for example, on page 13, lines 15-26. See also Figs. 2 and 5.

The Applicants respectfully submit that EP '447 merely discloses two portions of the resin foam of equal thickness. See EP '477 page 3, lines 13-17; page 4, lines 4-5; page 7, lines 43-44; and page 8, line 55 to page 9, wherein it is disclosed that the two portions have equal thickness.

Therefore, the Applicants respectfully submit that the combinations of elements set forth in independent claims 1 and 9, as set forth herein, are not disclosed or made obvious by the references cited by the Examiner, including EP '447. The Applicants again insist that this so-called admitted prior art does not remedy the deficiencies of EP '447.

Thus, independent claims 1 and 9 are in condition for allowance.

In view of the above amendments and arguments, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a) are respectfully requested.

Added Dependent Claims 5-8 and 10-14

The Examiner will note that dependent claims 5-8 (depending from claim 1) and claims 10-14 (depending from independent claim 9) are added to recite additional novel features of the present invention.

For example, EP '447 fails to teach or suggest a structure in which a molded resin laminate comprises a bent portion, wherein cells existing in the intermediate layer in the vicinity of the bent portion are elongated, as set forth in dependent claims 8 and 12 of the present invention. The Applicants respectfully submit even though the cells of EP '447 are allowed to expand, there is no teaching or suggestion whatsoever that any of the cells are elongated, as set forth in claims 8 and 12 of the present invention.

Nor, for example, does EP '447 disclose or make obvious the different thicknesses of the two regions of the intermediate layer, as set forth in dependent claims 5, 6, 11, and 12.

Inasmuch as EP '447 fails to teach or suggest the novel combinations of elements set forth in the claims of the present invention, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a) are respectfully requested, and allowance of independent claims 1 and 9 and dependent claims 2-8 and 10-14 are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

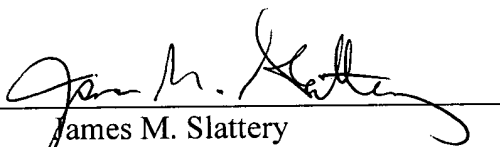
All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) respectfully petition(s) for a two (2) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$420.00 is attached to the concurrently filed Request for Continued Examination.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
James M. Slattery
Reg. No. 28,380

303-444P
JMS:CTT:jls

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000